



LITTLE TRAVERSE BAY BANDS OF ODAWA INDIANS
7500 ODAWA CIRCLE, HARBOR SPRINGS, MI 49740

Tribal Council Travel Report

Name:

John Bott – Tribal Treasurer

Training:

National Indian Gaming Association 22nd Annual Trade Show and Convention - Mar. 24-28, 2013

Day 1 - Sunday – Convention registration; became acquainted with the convention center and plotted daily agendas.

Day 2 – Monday – NIGA Membership meeting

Met with Rochanne Hackett of Wells Fargo Bank prior to the (Timothy Wapato) Cultural Reception

Invited to meet with Sovereign Finance, financial advisors

Day 3 – Tuesday – NIGA Membership meeting and Elections

Met with Clayton R. Vanderpool, Vice President of the Native American Gaming Group for PNC Bank

Day 4 – Wednesday – Indian gaming 2013 Tradeshow

Met with Steve Erikson advisor to the Controller for the Shakopee Mdewakanton Financing Projects

Met again with Sovereign Finance Sovereign Finance Office to Discuss/Review financial options

Some very hot topics were covered at the Conference this year:

According to PWC's Global Gaming Outlook the overall tribal casino markets will benefit from an improved economy during the latter part of a forecasted period that extends out to 2015. According to projections, modest but gradually accelerating growth in the next three years will occur. We then look for an improving economy to lead to stronger gains beginning in 2013. However, competition from regional casinos will continue to dampen tribal casino growth, limiting gains to mid-single digit advances. Revenues will increase from \$26.5 billion in 2010 to \$33.4 billion in 2015, a 4.7 percent compound annual increase.

Despite the advancements Indian country has seen there are still a number of issues that need to be addressed, primarily matters concerning land into trust, IRS audits and internet gaming.

Land into trust, the *Carcieri v. Salazar* case has limited the Department of the Interior's ability to take land into trusts for certain Indian tribes and needs to be addressed very quickly. A court ruling held that the federal government could only take land into trust for tribes that were "under federal recognition" when the Indian Reorganization Act became law in 1934. This term, "under federal recognition" is not defined in law and, more troubling, the government did not officially maintain a list of tribes until 1992. This decision affects a core aspect of tribal sovereignty: the ability of tribes to restore their homelands.

IRS audits of tribal programs have steadily become a concern for some tribes. The Internal Revenue Service has been auditing tribal governments with respect to health, education, welfare programs and other services that tribal governments provide to their citizens. In a lot of cases, they're saying if the tribe has a plan that benefits its tribal citizens on the reservation; it should be counted as taxable federal income for those tribal citizens. When the Affordable Health Care Act passed, tribes were able to get a provision in there exempting tribal health care benefits from federal taxation. That solved a healthcare problem, but now they've turned their attention to things such as educational programs, housing programs, cultural programs and other benefits, so it's a troubling issue for Indian country.

Why the IRS has engaged in this confusing matter of taxation is a bit of a mystery. The federal government does not tax state governments, and constitutional principle holds that federal government should not be able to tax tribal governments. On top of the respect for tribes as governments, the United States owes treaty and trust obligations to Indian tribes. Falling short of these obligations makes absolutely no sense.

Internet gaming is another hot topic for tribal gaming. It's been since the Department of Justice's change of heart on the Wire Act, however, that things are truly heating up. The decision sounded the alarm that began a race for a piece of the online gambling pie. While many tribes would gladly engage with this new market, there are a number of principles that must be explicitly stated in any Internet gaming legislature.

First and foremost, Indian tribes must be respected as governments and afforded the right to both operate and regulate the new industry in the same way that we operate and regulate gaming under IGRA. Tribal gaming regulators and commissions have used state-of-the-art regulatory surveillance and compliance technology for three decades. The second major principle is that tribes cannot be taxed. This should not be a point of contention as the United States Constitution and 14th amendment clearly states that tribes and activity on tribal land cannot be taxed. Recent IRS issues with regard to taxation however have put tribes on their guard and it is wise to want this point included.

How this all shakes out is yet to be seen but right now, at this point, it's more about fair access to the market. Recent poker-only bills have already given a head start to large corporations and a handful of state governments. It is essential that any Internet gaming legislation respect tribal autonomy and it is more important that NIGA members stand and tackle these issues together.

I want to personally thank Tribal Council for approving my trip to NIGA and in return I want to invite each Tribal Councilor to attend the NIGA sessions whenever possible, Indian Country is moving at an unprecedented rate with even newer technologies, the networking is invaluable and the Midwest Region needs to begin to have a louder voice across Indian Country or we will be left behind.

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Activity Schedule

Sunday, March 24

6 – 11 am	NABI “Chasing the Sun” 7k 5k 1 Mile Health Walk/Fair	Wesley Bolin Plaza (AZ State Capital Bldg)
7am-7 pm	Registration	Phoenix Convention Center
9:15 am	Sovereignty Golf Tournament	Saguaro at We-ko-pa Golf Club, Fort McDowell
9:30 am	Chairman’s Golf Tournament	Cholla at We-ko-pa Golf Club, Fort McDowell
10:30 am	Vice Chairman’s Golf Tournament	Whirlwind Golf Club at Gila River
5:30 – 8:00 pm	Chairman’s Welcome Reception	Wild Horse Pass Hotel & Casino at Gila River
8:30 pm	<i>Presenting Creedence Clearwater Revisited Ovarions Live! Showroom</i>	

Monday, March 25

7 am – 7 pm	Registration	Phoenix Convention Center
7:30 – 8:30 am	Associate Member Meeting	Room 125B
8 am – 5 pm	Native American Arts & Crafts Booths Open	Exhibit Hall 6
9 – 11:30 am	NIGA Membership Meeting	Ballroom 120D
	Continental Breakfast and Coffee	
9 – 10 am	Casino Department Roundtables	Rooms 221 - 232
9 – 10 am	Workshop Session 1	Rooms 121 -132
9 – 11:15 am	Certifications Session 1	Rooms 121 - 132
9 am – 4 pm	Commissioner Certification Level 1	Room 224 AB
10:15 – 11:15 am	Workshops Session 2	Rooms 121 - 132
11:30 am – 12:30 pm	Workshops Session 3	Rooms 121 - 132
11:30 am – 12:30 pm	Regional Caucuses	Rooms 221 – 232
12:30 – 1:30 pm	Chairman’s Leadership Award Luncheon *	Ballroom 120ABC
2:15 – 3:15 pm	Workshops Session 4	Rooms 121 – 132
2:15 – 4:30 pm	Certifications Session 2	Rooms 121 – 132
3:30 – 4:30 pm	Workshops Session 5	Rooms 121 - 132
1:30 – 5:00 pm	NIGA Membership Meeting	Ballroom 120D
5 - 7 pm	Cultural Reception	Hyatt Regency Phoenix – Ballroom
	<i>Presenting the Timothy Wapato Sovereign Warrior Award</i>	
7 - 9 pm	American Indian Networking Reception	Hyatt Regency Phoenix Atrium
	<i>Presented by AIBN and the American Indian Chamber of Commerce of Arizona, sponsored by Tutor Perini Building Corp</i>	

Tuesday, March 26

7 am – 5 pm	Registration	Phoenix Convention Center
8 am – 5 pm	Native American Arts & Crafts Booths Open	Exhibit Hall 6
9 am – 4 pm	Commissioner Certification Level 1	Room 224 AB
9 – 9:45 am	Workshops Session 6	Rooms 121 - 132
9:45 am	PRESS CONFERENCE	Exhibit Hall Foyer
10:00 am	INDIAN GAMING 2013 TRADE SHOW	
	RIBBON CUTTING	Exhibit Hall Foyer
10 am – 4 pm	INDIAN GAMING 2013 TRADE SHOW	Exhibit Halls 4, 5, 6
11 am – 12 pm	Regional Caucuses	Rooms 221 – 232
1:30 – 5:00 pm	NIGA Membership Meeting & Annual Election	Ballroom 120D
2 – 4 pm	Workshops Session 7	Exhibit Hall & Rooms 121 - 132
4:15 – 6:15 pm	AIBN Reception	Ballroom 120ABCD Pre-Function area
6:30 - 9 pm	Wendell Chino Humanitarian Award Banquet*	Ballroom 120ABC
	<i>Featuring Chicago</i>	

Wednesday, March 27

8 am – Noon	Registration	Phoenix Convention Center
8 am – 4 pm	Native American Arts & Crafts Booths Open	Exhibit Hall 6
9 am	Indian Gaming 2014 Exhibitor Sign-up	Exhibit Hall Foyer
9 – 10 am	Workshops Session 8	Rooms 121- 132
10 am – 2 pm	INDIAN GAMING 2013 TRADE SHOW	Exhibit Halls 4, 5, 6
10 – 11 am	Workshops Session 9	Exhibit Hall & Rooms 121 - 132
1 pm	GRAND PRIZE DRAWING ON SHOW FLOOR – MUST BE PRESENT TO WIN	
2 – 4 pm	NIGC Consultation	Room 211 AB West

Thursday, March 28

7 pm	NIGA Night with the Phoenix Suns*	US Airways Center
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**PLEASE NOTE: A Separate ticket is required for these three events*